

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

April 1, 2003

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Osborne.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta (late), Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard,
O’Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Forest

Absent: Alderman Thibault

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state your name and address when recognized, and give your comments.

Bob Shaw, 172 Arah Street, stated I’m here tonight because at the last meeting where you were given the City budget there were some comments made about the Charter Commission. I happen to be one of the members of the Charter Commission. I happen to be right there in the middle somewhere. The problem...I’m here tonight speaking for myself. I have no authorization to speak for the Charter Commission. None of my ideas at all have anything at all to do with what the Charter Commission is doing, except for the fact that we are not a bunch of clowns. We are doing our work at diligently as can. We have a right to change our mind. We’ve actually brought this Charter Commission from the vote of one against last time to four against the current charter. So...I mean we’ve made progress and I think that it is just wrong for somebody to take the time of a special meeting and without the ability to have that question come before the Aldermen to give a speech as to the quality of the work of another division of this City. As a citizen...I was told today in Concord that one percent of people voted for a charter revision. It’s true that one percent authorized a charter commission, but it’s not true that one percent voted for the people that are on it. There were

75 people on the Charter Commission ballot. The highest vote getter got 8,200 votes, that's 4,000 less than the Mayor. So basically I just think it is wrong for this group here to take it upon themselves to criticize the work that we're doing without being there themselves to understand that debate is good. I passed you all out some information tonight and especially one sheet of that information has the tax rate that I predicted 15 years ago. The tax rate we're paying today was what we had I guessed at 15 years ago. So you can see where you're headed anyway.

Jeff Kassel, 22 Appleton Street, stated I was looking at the Union Leader today and in the Manchester section Aldermen want to see exact figures and I read that article pretty closely and I noted that Alderman Garrity this was his quote "We're voting on \$110 million project and we don't know if the numbers are any good." And that's true. A lot of things of changed, the Bedford vote changed, the financial mix and it's a pretty complicated question. I've talked to a few aldermen about this vote and I'm pretty upset about it. Like a lot people in this city I didn't pay too much attention to City government many years while I lived here when my taxes were low. I think I've said before at this body that my taxes originally when I came here about 25 years ago were \$730 year. My real estate taxes and now they're approaching \$4,000. So now I pay a little more attention to it. And when I hear number like \$110 million I get pretty upset about it. Because this is going be coming out of the hides of every taxpayer in this city. And I talked about the sports Mafia that seems to have taken over this town and we've got an educational Mafia that's also taking over the town, and have captured the political process. Under Bob Baines and essentially this Aldermanic board, we've had building proposals and actual building and bond of around a quarter of a billion dollars over the last three or four years. Now that's very serious money for a small city and it's got to be paid for. Well, I don't think we need to spend \$110 million to renovate schools. Obviously the educational establishment thinks we've got to spend it but they'll grab every dollar they possibly can because that's the way bureaucracy operate. They just suck up the money. And since I don't work for the school board and don't receive any of that money, but have to pay for it like every other taxpayer, I'm against it.

Mike LaClaire, 1743 Brown Avenue, stated I am a father of three children, two of whom go to Highland Goffs Falls and a daughter that will be joining her brothers at Highland very soon. I am also the PTA president. I can assure you that you'll be seeing me again. You have been presented with a plan that will finally address the long over due additions and renovations to our children's learning center. I call it that for the simple reason that it is just that – our children's learning centers. Many boys and girls who attend our schools cannot come before you and express their will. If the many schools did have voting privileges, I could assure you we would not be in this situation today. It seems to me we have not put the children first. Our sons and daughter, nieces, nephews, grandkids our most precious resource. These kids are our future. That is an indisputable fact. I can not imagine that a business that is looking to relocate to Manchester would find it more appealing having a civic center or new ballpark over first rate schools. I bet a corporation will look at our

dedication to our education as a positive step in turning our highly trained individuals. If you feel we need to label it, call it intellectually advanced renewable resources. Although I do not agree with everything in this design/build, I feel that greater harm would be done by doing nothing at all. And I will leave you with a quote; “Most people are willing to pay more to be amused than to be educated.” Robert Savage

Jon Thibault, 17 Hedge Street, stated I am an eighth grade student council officer at the Middle School of Parkside. My opinion of the building proposal is yes. I believe that the environment a student is in greatly affects the attitude they have toward their peers, teachers and academic performance. So if these changes are made, then the schools environment would be much more comfortable. Also I think it would make more students want to go to school and this will improve our dropout rate. Thank you and please vote yes for the building proposal.

Eric Landry, 777 Goffstown Road, stated I am an eighth grader and student council officer at the Middle School at Parkside. I am asking you to support the building proposal. I’m asking this because I’ll be attending West next year and it’s important to me as for all kids to be in a positive and good learning environment. I’m looking forward to the different programs that will be offered with the new additions, but that would not be possible if the building proposal is not approved. It is important for the incoming students to West and all the public schools in Manchester over the next few years to have quality facilities and quality programs. I appreciate the time you have taken to hear my opinions. Thank you.

Katie Demers, 760 Hevey Street, stated I have been asked to speak to you tonight regarding the future renovations of West High School and I am currently a junior at West. As a student these past three years I can attest to the superior education provided by the faculty of the current facility but I can only imagine what additional classrooms, increased library space, and an up-to-date auditorium would do for everyone at our school. Currently at West it is typical to find up to 30 students per class in congested hallways on any days. Previous studies have proven that high student/teacher ratios are not conducive to productive learning. The addition of classroom would create smaller class sizes, thus making learning easier for all involved. As a member of the Manchester West Chamber Choir and Theater Nights programs I would like to point out the need of renovation of our auditorium. Seating in our auditorium is currently worn out if not broken and despite the valiant of the West High community to raise money for renovations, our auditorium is still far from adequate. The many performing groups from West have won countless awards and they hold great talent and dedication and deserve to be presented a space that is deserving of this work. The library is also utilized by hundreds of students and faculty throughout the day. There’s an area essential to our academic development. It is hoped that this renovation will expand the space of our library a considerable amount allowing this educational necessity to become better utilized. Currently many repairs are needed in our building. Throughout the school in hallways and in classroom trash barrels collect water that drips from the leaky roof and

ceilings must be...students must be moved when the ceiling is dripping above their desk. Obviously this does not lead to productive learning. Presently we are unsure with our future partnership with Bedford; however, the future of West can not hinge on this decision. West High School regardless of this decision not only needs but deserves an upgraded facility. The students of West High deserve better.

Michael Brennon-White, 70 Walnut Street, stated I'm a father with a daughter at Central and a child at the McDonough School and another child going to McDonough next year who is being rather loud actually back there. I do want to express support for the building plans that they have...that have been suggested though they aren't perfect and I also wanted to express support for the budget that has been proposed by the schools also for the upcoming year.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, stated first of all in the little red book on the charter Rule 2A, members of the public shall have three minutes to speak and I believe it's Rule 6. I will be grateful if the chair when the chair wants to express their opinion on any subject that they follow this rule and step down. Make no mistake about it the schools are in disrepair; they need renovations and additions. It's your job to tweak the numbers. Ok, there's a lot of interesting questions last night from Alderman Gatsas, Alderman Garrity, Alderman Lopez, and Mr. Gross from the school board. The highest number I heard from Gilbane was \$95 million. Where does the \$110 million come from? Mr. Sherman came in here with numbers that were completely inadequate to be making the presentation to you people. Mr. Garrity you were right. You're being asking in a two-week period to compress this vote and take it on the 15th. Why? Why wasn't the presentation that was made last night made by the first of February so the sending towns could also have time to digest that. There's got to be a reason. Interesting thing, Mr. Tim Clougherty had some of the best comments last night. He made a comment about the parking garage for Central High, and one of them was very important aspect he said was it's not taking any housing by eminent domain. Gee some of you people didn't recognize that when you voted for the senior center on the West Side. Did you? Not very important huh? Upcoming budget...I suggest this board have at least \$1 million in that budget for street reconstruction, not repaving, reconstruction. The infrastructure in this City is falling apart and unless you take care of it you're going to have the same thing that you are with the schools right now.

Jim Jensen, 450 East High Street, stated my wife Deborah is with me and we came out tonight to speak on behalf of the school building program. We sent our kids to St. Catherine's and St. Joe's for elementary school and junior high. I had no parochial school education but we value it and we spent the extra money because in our household nothings too good for our kids. And if we have to push and save in other places, we do that because we want to make sure we afford our kids, particularly when it comes to their education, the best that we can. And I think...we also just refinanced our home for maybe the second or third time recently to take advantage of economically called historically low interest rates and a remarkable opportunity to finance something that's for the future. So we hope that the

board members are sort of on the fence about this we know you have to do your due diligence and we hope you will come to some terms so that we as a community can actually say there's nothing too good for our kids. Step up and make some of the expenditures that are necessary. Our kids are now...when they left St. Catherine's the year that the gym was built and they're juniors, they're twins, at Central High School. The teachers there are remarkable, they do a great job, our kids have gotten a very good education from Central but it's overcrowded. It's tired, it needs reinvestment and it needs more room for the kids that are there. So...as I said we hope that you'll find some way to come to terms and take advantage of the fact that...I was going through the shopping market, Hannaford, and these days when you go through Hannaford you hear Jimmy Buffet, you hear Bruce Springstein and it makes me realize we are in power. You folks are obviously all in power, it's our generations chance to step up, we won't have an opportunity like this in our generation to make something happen for this kind of a rate.

John Rist, 192 So. Mammoth Road, stated I also have a job that I love at Central High School. The quality of a society is measured by the education that we provide our children. In Manchester we need to improve that quality. We are still providing a quality product however it won't continue ladies and gentlemen, it just won't continue. I've been in the business now for 30 years. For many years I was at the school of technology and I know what a decent facility and decent technology and a clean environment does for learning. We need to provide the same opportunity that we provide for the 900 kids at Manchester School of Technology to the 6,000 kids at the three comprehensive high schools. Renovations, we need them right now. If you brought me all the technology that I wanted I couldn't plug it in. We need to be wired. I need bells that work. I need an intercom system that works. I need clocks that tell the right time more than twice a day. We need a lot of things. Our industrial arts area is a disgrace; the home economics area is ridiculous. We have a great music program and our music department, the physical facility, is terrible. The renovations are needed now. McAlester Hall you've been there, it's beautiful. It needs some work though. Let's talk about the addition. If you want lower test scores, if you want less drop outs, and you want better college acceptances, and you want better employees, then the thing you need to do is to lower teacher student ratio. There's only one way you can do that. If you bought me ten teachers tomorrow, I'd have no place to put them. We need the renovations. So I'm here to ask you two things: A – show some courage, go with your heart, do the right thing, be...I invite you some day at 5 o'clock to a reception when the New England schools and colleges boards will be doing an accreditation at Central and please explain to them why you didn't vote for you. Thank you.

Katherine Duval, 58 Leandre Street, stated I am currently a sophomore at West High School. I'm am speaking before you tonight to ask you to vote to appropriate funds for the renovation and building additions to West High. Having been a student at Parkside in the 7th and 8th grades, I know first hand the benefits of what new classrooms and more space mean to enhancing education. As a student at West I'm a member of the Chamber Choir which is

an honors course. We perform at many events and in front of many diverse audiences. Our choral director Mr. Richard Maynard is one of the most dedicated teachers I know. We have performed in the auditorium, which is way overdue for renovations. If this money is appropriated for West, this auditorium would finally be a place we could be proud to perform in. Not only would this be exciting but the possibility of West being a magnet high school for a program such as fine arts, would be a credit to the West Side as well as to the City of Manchester. The addition of 12 classrooms and renovations to both the media center and cafeteria are also sorely needed. And last but certainly not the least thing I would like you to remember is the fact that West will be due for recertification shortly. When you are considered for admission to college, your high school and what it offers, and if it meets standards are looked at very closely. If these additions and renovations are completed at last, recertification will certainly happen. Please look to the future. We are the future of this city. We need to be educated in the best possible environment. I urge you to vote to appropriate the money to make West a better place to go to school. Thank you.

Howie Howe, 525 Wilson Street, stated I'm speaking tonight because I'm greatly disturbed about the actions of some members of the board in what I can only describe as class warfare. Manchester is a working class city and the majority of the people who work here hold blue collar and industrial jobs. Like all major cities we have our share of impoverished and underpaid people as well. It is the obligation of our leaders to ensure that the needs of all our people are not just theirs that deem fit to live in their city. Some of you believe that what is best for the city is to attract a higher class of people to replace those already living here. Even if you don't voice it, your actions are targeted towards it. I have heard political leaders in this city flatly state that we can cure problems such as overcrowding in our schools by simply allowing taxes to escalate to the point where the lower classes, who usually house the most children, can no longer afford to live here. They hide behind such things as the bubble theory. Around the middle of this decade the school population will start to decline because there will be less children entering our school system. This is pure bunk and the only reason it could happen is if we continue to develop a major population watching our youngest and brightest continue to lead the way. Our schools need the expansions recommended no matter what. Every major city in this country especially those with successful management at the helm have seen major growth over the past 40 years. Yet Manchester seems to have only grown 3 percent while our efforts for diversity has changed greatly. What this really means, is that our current population keeps moving out to be replaced by a new group of struggling blue-collar people.

Marcy Lyman, 415 North River Road, stated I am here to express my support for this school building program. I have three children, one of whom went through all three elementary...Hillside and Central that's graduated. I have a child at Central and a child at Hillside. I think students that have already spoken tonight have said it the best. We need the space, we need the renovations, we need to invest in our children and as a student of

economic development, investing in schools is a very good economic development strategy. Thank you.

Kathy Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated I am the President of the Manchester Coalition for Quality Education. I have two children currently enrolled in the Manchester school system. I have a daughter who is an 8th grader at Hillside and I have a son who is a 3rd grader at the McDonough Elementary School and I am a taxpayer. And when I pay my taxes this is what I expect: I want my trash picked up, I want professional police and fire protection, I want the streets plowed, and I want decent schools. This is an investment. The buildings will be with us for years. They will become community assets. I have one more thing to say. If you can guarantee some third rate baseball impresario \$285,000 to just think about bringing a baseball team to Manchester, then you can guarantee my daughter a place to sit down and eat her lunch next year when she goes to Central.

Mark Roy, 608 River Road, stated I come to you this evening as a business owner, a homeowner, a taxpayer, advocate for schools, and candidate for Alderman in Ward I. I'm here tonight to passionately encourage all of our Aldermen to support the school renovation and addition proposal made public last evening. As Vice-Chairman of the School Facilities Committee I had the opportunity to review the Parsons-Brinckerhoff report and take an in-depth look at our school facilities, and I can tell you their condition is deplorable. Focused by the children that are here telling you that this evening. Overcrowding, deferred maintenance, heating and ventilation problems, portables, and curriculum changes have left the children of Manchester at a disadvantage. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen have a rare opportunity to correct many of these deficiencies with one broad economic stroke...economical stroke. The proposal in front of you will have a lasting affect for all the children of the City of Manchester for years to come. As a taxpayer I cannot advocate this if it was to substantially raise my taxes, but with the financing package worked out by Kevin Clougherty and the Finance Department there will be no raise in taxes because of this proposal. If there's one phrase that catches, or keeps your attention on this subject it should be better schools without new taxes. Yes the City will incur debt, but by finally taking this long overdue action, you as our elected representatives can improve the facilities our children attend, increase the desirability to incoming businesses, and increase the value of our homes all while providing jobs and growth in this city. I encourage all of you to ask the tough questions of the department heads and then I would like you to ask some tough questions for yourselves. Can the City afford not to improve our schools? Are we as Aldermen committed to providing the best education for our tax dollars, that our tax dollars allow? Are we doing the best we can for tomorrow's teachers, doctors, plumbers and leaders? Are we doing what's best for the children?

Lorraine Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, stated I have three children in the Manchester school system. A senior and sophomore at Central and a seventh grader at Hillside. Currently I am the PTSO President at Central High School. I am here too as everyone else is to ask you to

support the design/build program for our schools. Our children have waited too long for the repairs, the renovations, and the additions to the schools. Just looking at the high schools alone, our high schools are facing reaccreditation and as John Rist said, on Central the team will be there April 6th to begin the process. Just the physical condition alone at Central will put the school on probation and possibly have us lose our accreditation, and West and Memorial are following right after us. We need to do something about these schools. Bonding this proposal will not produce a hockey championship for the Manchester Monarchs and it won't produce a World Series for the proposed baseball team, but it will be the golden ticket for each student in this Manchester school system. It's time we give the kids that whole Willy Wonka Factory, that candy factory. They need to have school facilities and programs that are too good to be true.

Joyce Coll, 61 Sandy Brook Street, stated I have two children. I have a daughter going into Memorial High School and I have a 3rd grader at Highland Goffs Falls. I'm a PTA member and I'm here to support the design/build and I'm begging you to please support it and vote for it. The only...I'm prepared with a written speech but I do want to share with you my reflection of Memorial High School orientation where the Science Department was really excited with the possibility of having their new wing and to know that my daughter will go into a school and an environment where teachers are really excited. That will trickle down to the students and help them to be the most productive that they can be and get the most out of their education. So please, I'm asking you to support the design/build.

Kat Bagley, 50 Charles Chase Way, stated I am a senior at Central High School. I am here asking your support for the proposed buildings. I am the Vice-President of the Senior Class and the editor in chief of the Laurel Green. I am also the Vice-President of the National Honor Society, assistant editor-in-chief of the Literary Magazine and a couple of other things. Have any of the adults here, other than the teachers, walked the halls of Central High School. Have they ever sat in a classroom, have they ever tried to use a locker. Have they ever tried to find parking spaces in the morning. If they had, they would have found hallways that students have literally push their way through. They would have found a senior calculus class with 33 students in a classroom without enough desks. They would have found four or five people sharing a locker and if they had tried to find parking spaces they would have found that they would have had to park past the administration building on Bridge Street or past Manchester Street just to get a parking space. When I graduate in June, I graduate with a complete sense of fulfillment. I went to an amazing school. I had wonderful teachers. I participated in extra-curriculars that gave back to the community. I was on outstanding athletic teams and I made great friends, but I didn't have facilities that I was proud of. The buildings today are in poor shape, that part is obviously. What many people don't realize that because of the population of that school and condition of the buildings and campus, many learning opportunities are hindered. If we have a classroom a ratio...a student/teacher ratio of less than 30 to 1, guaranteed you're test scores will go up. You have a huge drop out rate and you guys always wonder about that, and that probably go

down as well. We need the support and please I am serious, give us a school system that we deserve.

George Bruno, 161 North Adams Street, stated good evening Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen of the board. I have a daughter who is a sophomore at Central High School and I've never considered myself a member of the education Mafia but I do want to join those voices that have been raised here this evening in support of school improvements. I also want to commend Dr. Bass, Dr. Aliberti, Superintendent Ludwell, and Mayor Baines, and all other elected officials, some of you among them who have supported the improvements in our schools and who last night laid out a vision for these improvements. It was a proud moment I think in Manchester's history. Most important we were given a blueprint for the renovation and expansion of Manchester's crowded and deteriorating schools. I think we all recognize that they are in very deteriorating and neglectful shape. It may me almost forget about the nights when parents and children and teachers grovel here for desks and lockers and school books and working toilets and roofs that didn't leak. Listening to you last I and my family were left feeling hopeful that we would finally see no only improved facilities, but programs that help advance Manchester's educational goals. Now as Aldermen you have the chance to show leadership and vision. Please do not hold this plan hostage to tuition town agreements. Whether Bedford comes with us or not, we still need to go forward and improve Manchester's schools and we still need to trust our professionals that they will make the right decisions. You trusted them on the civic center, you trusted them at the airport, and I'm asking you to trust them again and to show your support and this is hour to lead and to invest in our future. Thank you very much.

Daniel Fitzgerald, 69 Lancelot Avenue, stated I have three daughters; one who has graduated from Central and two more in the system. A sophomore at Central and one who will be a freshman next year. I'm also a 1971 graduate of Central and I'm just here to ask that I think you have a wonderful opportunity here to really protect the future of this city with this school improvement plan. I graduated in 1971 and for the life of me I don't think we've made any significant improvements to the school since I graduated. Manchester Central is a tremendous high school, one of the best in the country, but it's been in a slow steady decline and we're going to lose a tremendous resource unless we protect it. So please do the right thing; vote this school plan in.

Madeline Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated I'm a student at Hillside Middle School. This is my last year at Hillside and as I look back at my time there I see many things that could and should be fixed. There are many challenges to over come at Hillside that often don't have to do with academics. Like finding a seat in my science class that isn't cracked in half, or one in the cafeteria that is tilted at a 45 degree angle, if its there at all. This year my team has been eating lunch at nearly 1 PM leaving us so hungry it hurts for at least an hour. Have you ever trying doing French on an empty stomach? While the noises coming from it can be louder than the actual teacher? You could imagine what it was like when we were studying

French food in an English classroom. Yes you heard right, my French class occurs in an English classroom, with no maps of France to use for reference, no posters to help learn conjugations, nothing. My teacher teaches out of a canvas bag that she carries around with her. If she want to bring something to share in class it has to fit in the bag, or she has to carry it down from the office she shares with two or more people. I look forward to going to Central next year. I've heard lots of horror stories about lockers, plumbing, heating, and such. I would appreciate having a locker next year, and I'd appreciate it even more if it actually works. I want adequate heating for my mid terms and rooms that don't smell because of the nearby bathrooms. All joking about the state of the schools today, one of my friends made a comment about using vaccines to drink from the bubblers. I don't look forward to being trampled in hallways that are built way too small for the amount of students attending the schools. I'm a good kid. I work hard, I do well and I deserve a school that's clean, safe, and big enough. I can't get these things on my own. I need your help.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on a motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on a motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Copy. Attest.

City Clerk